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The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

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24 April 1984

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED]  
National Intelligence Officer for NESAs

SUBJECT: Forecasting and Warning Meeting Report, 19 April 1984

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1. Sri Lanka. CIA provided a brief overview of the current situation on the island and gave an estimate of how we see Indian policy towards Sri Lanka unfolding. DIA gave an overview of likely military warning indicators on impending Indian military action and the DIA analyst offered his views on the outcome of an Indian-Sri Lankan clash.

Analysts believe that there is little likelihood of an immediate Indian military move, despite recent amphibious exercises and some thinly veiled threats contained in Mrs. Gandhi's letters to President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher. Instead, we believe India will employ a combination of diplomatic pressure, sabre-rattling and semi-public support for Tamil dissidents in Indian training camps in an effort to get President Jayewardene to concede some form of autonomy for Sri Lankan Tamils.

Some analysts felt that this combination of Indian pressures might well prove counterproductive--particularly the training of Tamil dissidents--leading Jayewardene to toughen his stand instead of compromising, thus raising the possibility that India would have to move militarily.

INR noted that India has for some time felt that the US is following a policy of regional encirclement vis-a-vis India--that the Indians in particular see the Presidential visit to China and closer ties to Pakistan in this light--and might try to break out of this perceived encirclement by moving against Sri Lanka. In any event, efforts by the US to demonstrate support for Sri Lanka--particularly ship visits--would

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almost certainly raise Indian fears and could contribute to an Indian decision to move against Sri Lanka.

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A DIA analyst also offered his view that even a limited Indian invasion of Sri Lanka might not be the walk-over that is universally foreseen. We would certainly expect India to win, but the cost of the victory and the subsequent occupation might well be larger than the Indians expect.

Analysts also noted that we can expect an appeal from Sri Lanka for US aid in the event of an Indian move and that policymakers ought to be planning now what the US response will be.

2. Syria--Succession Struggle. CIA gave a presentation on the current status of the succession struggle and some possible consequences. There was general agreement that whatever the outcome we cannot expect to see fundamental changes in Syrian policy. Specifically, we would not expect any successor regime to cut ties with the Soviets, abandon Syrian interests in Lebanon or enter the peace process under conditions other than those stated by Assad. Moreover, a successor regime might well prove to be more erratic and less adroit than Assad and could well undertake regional adventures.

Analysts agreed that there were several ways in which the current stalemate could be broken:

- an accidental clash between Rifaat's supporters and their army opponents.
- a decision by one side to preempt and launch a surprise attack on the other side.
- assassination attempts by one side against the leadership of the other. Rifaat is the most likely target of such moves.

The group also agreed that in the short term Rifaat's forces probably have the upper hand--his forces are better positioned near and

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in Damascus, for example--but that a prolonged struggle would probably favor his opponents in the army who could bring greater force to bear over the long run.

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3. Iran--Iraq: Iranian Offensive and Leadership Problems. DIA said there is some evidence to suggest that the much-vaunted Iranian offensive is now more or less permanently on hold and that we can expect little in the way of major military moves by Iran until at least later this year. In the meantime, we can probably expect Iran to continue to follow more or less a strategy of attrition. DIA stressed that this analysis was still tentative and that we needed to know more about the disposition of some Iranian forces before we can conclusively state that the offensive has been delayed. Most analysts agreed, however, that there is mounting evidence that the major Iranian offensive may not take place.

INR spoke to Iranian leadership attitudes on the war, noting that there is some evidence of discontent among the senior clerics with the "military option" and that this may well be a factor in Tehran's failure to launch its offensive. INR noted, for example, that the usually hawkish Rafsanjani has been relatively quiet thus far and also cited several diplomatic reports from Tehran reporting dissension within the upper levels of the government. However, INR and others stressed that Khomeini still speaks of the "final offensive" against Iraq and we have no evidence to suggest that he has dropped his desire for the offensive.

The option of turning the war over to the Majlis for a final decision on how to proceed was also discussed. Analysts agreed that this was increasingly likely but that Khomeini and the senior clerics still

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had to lay out the options for the Majlis to follow in resolving the war--as they did in turning the hostage case over to the parliament--and could not simply pass the problem to the Majlis.

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